

'FOREENERGY 86' — EUROPEAN FORUM: ENERGY IN TOWNS, HELD AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE OF GENEVA, 15 RUE DE VAREMBÉ, 1202 GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, DURING 16–18 DECEMBER 1986

This auspicious event was sponsored by the City of Geneva and the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe—a body affiliated with the Council of Europe. Organized by the Office of Cooperation for Renewable Energies (COPER), it also benefited from the support of various other concerns and affiliations.

Urban and Regional Energy Management—'Energy in Towns'

Under the general title of 'Energy in Towns', the Forum dealt with urban and regional energy management. Its objectives were to help society to meet the energy challenge by promoting specific aspects related to energy conservation, the use of renewable sources of energy, and recovery of energy from wastes.

The Forum 'Forenergy 86' was addressed by numerous speakers: politicians, local and regional representatives, specialists and experts from public organizations, industry, and the universities, as well as by delegates from national and international bodies. It was also attended by policy-makers and energy managers from all over Europe, including representatives of some 40 European cities.

Geneva is thus becoming a meeting-place and a centre of discussions on some of the most vital energy issues including the rational utilization of the available energy resources. Throughout this international event the sponsors endeavoured to initiate a dialogue and lend worth-while support to 'those who are confronted, in their daily decisions as well as in their long-term choices, with the profound technological changes which are nowadays under way'.

'Energy and Society'—a Debate

As already indicated, the main topics of the Forum were: how to save energy, how to exploit renewable forms of energy, and how to make the best possible use of wastes. To politically responsible officers at the city and regional levels, 'these concerns are not merely of a technical and economical nature: they are also philosophical in essence'.

The organizers accordingly decided to raise the discussions to a higher level on the occasion of a debate which took place after an evening gathering. This debate, under the lively chairmanship of Edouard J. Logoz, gave the opportunity to various speakers to express their scientific, political, and philosophical, views on the subject 'Energy and Society'. Reflecting today's situations and preoccupations, they attempted to reach a global vision of the problems which society is now facing, and which will determine our common destiny.

Energy–Environment–Society—Evident Correlations

Although the Forum dealt primarily with energy problems, some of the speakers, unavoidably, hinted at the obvious links between energy and the environment, and emphasized how the impact of energy on environment had to be taken into account. Indeed, facile abuse of energy

could well 'darken the future of mankind behind the mountains of its wastes and the veil of its smokes.'

In this respect, a notable contribution was an address by Professor Nicholas Polunin, who was one of the guest speakers of the evening debate. He spoke on 'Energy-use and The Biosphere', and took the opportunity to express the deep concern of scientists who witness the alarming degradation of The Biosphere. This, along with a runaway demography, is likely to affect society and human life quite drastically.

There are rays of hope, however, which sustain the efforts of all those who endeavour to find or promote solutions to our predicaments. One of the most promising is the replacement of fossil fuels by hydrogen. As a fitting conclusion to the debate, Professor Polunin read an enlightening message from Professor John O'M. Bockris, Texas A & M University, who is the leader of an American team engaged in hydrogen research. It seems that one solution to both our energy and environment problems might well be in sight if we move towards a solar-hydrogen economy.*

'Forenergy 86' will be followed by other 'Forenergy' meetings. It is likely that more emphasis will be placed, in such future events, on the correlations between energy and environment.

ROGER L. EGLOFF, *Project Engineer*
Office of Cooperation for Renewable Energies (COPER)
Centre International
1 Rue de Varembe
CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland.

* See for example, John O'M. Bockris & T. Nejat Veziroglu: 'A Solar-Hydrogen Energy System for Environmental Compatibility', published in *Environmental Conservation*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pages 105–18, with 2 figures and 4 tables, 1985.

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON 'GREENING THE CITY: ECOLOGICALLY-SOUND APPROACHES TO URBAN OPEN-SPACE MANAGEMENT', HELD IN TORONTO, CANADA, DURING 18–20 February 1987

The purpose of this Symposium, organized by Toronto's Pollution Probe Foundation, and supported by registrants' fees and a number of organizations, was to bring together experts and citizens from Britain, Europe, Central America, and Asia, to present case-studies and to discuss the implementation of the new concept of 'the green city'. By this is meant, not the stylized 'garden cities' of earlier urban plans, or the simple promotion of tree-planting, but the multifaceted concept of urban places that are more ecologically-sound and less destructive of their natural environments than their predecessors. The programme defined 'green' as 'ecologically sustainable', the main focus of the Symposium being on how to restore ecological integrity to urban spaces.

Thus the Symposium included plenary addresses, panels, papers, workshops, and poster displays, demonstrating in all a great variety of ideas and methods—including the preservation of 'wilderness' within urban areas; the 'naturalizing' of roadsides; the design of 'ecology parks'; the variety of forms of 'urban agriculture'; waste treatment and reuse in urban-fringe farms, fish-ponds, and forests; ecological rehabilitation of areas such as utility corridors, lakes, streams, and marshlands; alternatives to synthetic pesticides in pest management; and encouragement of urban wildlife generally.

Besides those specific topics, there was opportunity for consideration of general issues such as the meaning of 'the

* In answer to our query about the Joint Institute's Energy Programme (see preceding page), the Author wrote 'it is organized by the Policy Studies Institute, 100 Park Village East, London, and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 10 St James's Square, London, to look at aspects of British and international energy policy.'—Ed.